



@USNPEOPLE WEEKLY WIRE

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1.) Military retirement overhaul on fast track/ 27 APRIL 15

MILITARY TIMES, Leo Shane III

The old, reliable military retirement system is about to be retired.

House and Senate lawmakers are moving ahead with dramatic plans to replace the current 20-year, all-or-nothing deal with a "blended" compensation system, complete with a 401(k)-style investment plan that promises all future troops will leave the service with some money for retirement.

The moves echo recommendations from the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission earlier this year, which pushed for changes to recognize the estimated 83 percent of service members who leave the military with no retirement benefits.

But some outside advocates still worry that, while well-intentioned, the change could decimate the senior noncommissioned and officer ranks, by giving them too much incentive to start a civilian career earlier and not enough incentive to stay to 20 years.

Lawmakers seem undeterred, at least for now. House Armed Services Committee members are expected in coming days to forward their retirement change proposal to the full House for consideration. Rep, Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, committee chairman, said he believes the move as a whole will strengthen the fighting force.

"This is the sort of change that isn't going to save a lot of money, but it's designed to attract and keep up the quality of talent in the military," he said.

Senate Armed Services Committee leaders said they'll follow suit early this summer. If those plans ultimately become law, the new retirement system would be in place by October 2017.

House proposal

The 20-year retirement model has served as a major military recruiting tool for decades, offering service members a sizable pension while still in their prime working years.

But critics have noted that troops fatigued by multiple combat tours, unsettled by frequent military moves or forced out due to force cuts are left with no employer-backed retirement offerings, even though most of their civilian counterparts have one.

The new proposal — included in early drafts of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill — would address that in dramatic fashion.

The commission recommendation and House committee's plan would offer a 401(k)-style investment account with government contributions that would travel with troops whenever they leave the military.

Plans call for an automatic federal contribution equal to 1 percent of troops' basic pay into their investment accounts, even if troops contribute nothing.

Service members then could choose to contribute up to 5 percent of their basic pay, and the government would provide matching contributions — offerings that mirror private-sector employee benefits.

The new retirement system also would offer a lump-sum "continuation pay" for service members who stay beyond 12 years of service and the traditional monthly annuity for those who serve for 20 years and beyond.

However, the payouts would be reduced by about 20 percent from current offerings, which has raised concerns among critics.

To counter that, Rep. Joe Heck, R-Nev., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee's personnel panel, said lawmakers will allow government matches to savings plans to continue past 20 years of service, a provision that was not a part of the commission's original proposal.

Lawmakers also are looking to dump complex lump-sum retirement payout options recommended by the commission in favor of a simpler plan.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said he supports the idea of the House plan, but his committee will work out its own details in weeks to come.

Still, McCain said the two committees are working closely on the idea and he expects little conflict on the issue between the chambers.

Lingering concerns

Troops already serving at the time the new plan takes effect would be grandfathered under their traditional military retirement system. They could choose to opt into the new plan, but would not be required to do so, as newly enlisting troops would be.

And Heck said the two-year process for implementation should give Congress and the Pentagon plenty of time to troubleshoot unexpected issues and calm fears about the potential effects of the new plan.

So far, it hasn't. Officials from Military Officers Association of America and the American Legion — two of the biggest critics in the debate so far — said they worry the process is still moving too fast, and that more study is needed to determine what effect the 401(k)-style offering will have on retention of older troops.

"Although we support providing a transportable career device for those who leave the service prior to attaining 20 years of service, MOAA has serious concerns that the commission's blended retirement benefit will fail to provide the necessary draw to retain service members to 20 years of service," the group said in a statement.

Heck disagreed with those concerns, as did a number of other outside advocates.

Officials from the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States applauded the move, saying it will improve the financial future of the vast majority of service members. Veterans of Foreign Wars officials echoed that sentiment.

"There is much to like about the new retirement plan because it gives people options," said Joe Davis, VFW spokesman. "It allows them to receive a government match throughout their career where currently there is none. It grandfathers everyone in uniform under the old system, but with an opportunity to opt into the new."

Work ahead

The House and Senate plans also will feature new financial literacy training for troops, so they better understand how the investment savings accounts will work and the risks involved.

Commission members had called that education component critical to the success of any retirement changes, since most troops now don't have enough familiarity with similar civilian retirement plans.

Lawmakers will mandate that Pentagon officials offer a path within six months to implement the new retirement plan, and launch the new system at the start of fiscal 2018.

White House officials are not expected to weigh in on the commission's retirement proposals until April 30.

But Defense Secretary Ash Carter already has talked in broad terms about the need to offer more civilian-type benefits to military enlistees, including 401(k)-style investments.

The plan still must navigate the months-long congressional authorization process before it heads to President Obama's desk for his final signature. But Heck said he is confident his colleagues will back the idea, in the interest of fairness.

"For too long, if you didn't serve 20 you left with nothing," Heck said. "This plan recognizes the service of everyone."

2.) Navy Seeks Suggestions Regarding Future of Navy and Marine Corps Officers/ 21 APRIL 15 [\[LINK\]](#)

NAVYLIVE, Naval Service Training Command Public Affairs

On April 27, the U.S. Naval Academy and Naval Service Training Command will launch a two-week crowd-sourcing initiative to receive input from officers and senior enlisted Sailors from every community regarding the common core curriculum at the Naval Academy, Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps and Officer Training Command. The interactive website, MMOWGLI, which stands for "Massive Multi-player Online Wargame Leveraging the Internet," will gather input and start a discussion that will impact the future of the Navy and Marine Corps.

So what is it?

MMOWGLI is an Office of Naval Research and Naval Postgraduate School product and has been employed on over a dozen different projects to utilize crowd sourcing to generate ideas and proposed solutions to large complex problems. Past games include Piracy, Energy, and Electromagnetic Maneuver.

How to play.

Follow the link to the NPS website. Log in and create a username. Once logged into the game, participants will choose a core competency within the curriculum of officer accessions training, identify ideas of concern, and begin a conversation with other game players to refine and elaborate suggestions for officer accession commands.

Within the game, current core requirements are shown under "Current Competencies" cards. "Future Competencies" are your opportunity to present fresh new ideas. As the game continues, other users may comment on your suggestions or build new discussion of their own for you to provide input.

Throughout the two weeks, ideas will build upon one another for review by an officer board of advisors and an executive steering committee following the completion of the game.

Why Is this important?

We need to be invested in our own future. The men and women serving our country right now are the most qualified to provide input on what the Navy will need in the future. Our Navy must stay relevant. Relevancy requires us to invest in both technology and personnel. It requires us to adapt to new mission requirements and the ever-changing state of the world. MMOWGLI is our best opportunity to ensure that we are continually investing in the development of our people, and thereby ensuring our relevancy.

MMOWGLI will be able to obtain fleet and shore inputs from the officer and senior enlisted community throughout the Navy in a manner that will generate a comprehensive set of recommendations that will assist in validating and/or revising the core curriculum for all Naval officers.

Who can participate?

The project is looking for all senior enlisted personnel and officers of any rank from every community to participate. We are seeking the input of unrestricted and restricted line officers as well as staff officers throughout our service. Participants must have a .edu or .mil address to sign up for the game. Game play is anonymous and there is no minimum required time commitment.

The more input received, the greater impact we will have on the future of our officer community. Sign up now and you will be notified next week when the game opens.

Your input will make a difference.

6 steps to playing MMOWGLI

1. Go to <https://mmowgli.nps.edu/pcc/>
2. When you first enter the game page, there are two options. If you are a new user, please select the left-side text "I'm new to MMOWGLI" to begin the registration process. If you already have an existing account in this game, please select "I'm registered".
3. You will be asked to read and accept the Terms and Conditions, which are two user agreements. If you agree to these conditions, which protect the privacy of players in the game, then please "accept and continue."
4. The first box titled "We don't need much to get you playing the game", asks for the email address you want associated with your MMOWGLI. You are also required to create a unique user name which will be used as your identification within the game. After deciding on your game password, please provide it in the fields labeled "Password" and "Confirm Password". Select an Avatar.
5. Start playing! Choose a blue or green card from the list presented at the bottom of the page. Blue cards represent current competencies. Green Cards represent future areas of competency. You cannot create new blue or green cards. Select a specific area to discuss.
6. The card will open with EXPAND, COUNTER, ADAPT or EXPLORE. Click on one of those four choices to insert a new card or select someone else's idea to comment on their proposal. By clicking on a card you want to comment on you will be given 140 characters to input an idea.

For assistance in game play, visit <https://portal.mmowgli.nps.edu/help>

3.) CAP season, for enlisted spot promotions, opens July 1/ 26 APRIL 15

NAVY TIMES, By Mark D. Faram

There's only one way to advance in the Navy without taking an advancement test — and the first year under the new rules is coming up fast.

Starting in July, commands will have three months to spot advance sailors to E-4, E-5 and E-6 via the Command Advancement Program under the new rules.

Navy officials also want commanding officers to avoid using their highly sought CAP slots to advance sailors who can't move up on their own or who are facing high-year tenure limits.

Instead, COs should be advancing their hot-runners, even those who may be shoe-ins to pick up rank on their next cycle, said Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. Bill Moran, who added this may be a cultural shift for some commands.

"The quality of our force and individual talents of our Sailors have grown dramatically since we introduced CAP in the 1970s, Moran told Navy Times in an April 16 interview.

What he doesn't want is skippers to use CAP to advance sailors who "aren't good test takers."

"This program was always intended to provide commanding officers the opportunity to meritoriously advance sailors who were ready for the next level of responsibility. Today, I'm confident that our COs and chief's mess know best who is ready, and trust that they will continue to exercise this special authority to advance their best talent — sailors of the year, hot-running guys or gals who stand out, sailors who have ability to lead at the next level."

The essentials of the Command Advancement Program:

CAP season

The old, year-round program is gone and COs are now restricted to a three-month "window" each year between July 1 and Sept. 30 to advance top sailors.

To get the best benefit, COs should prepare early and submit CAP certification letters July 1 to make their sailors' advancement effective date also July 1. That way, sailors will start getting paid at their new paygrade on that date, too.

Eligible commands

Currently, the program is only open to sea duty commands, such as ships, submarines and squadrons. In addition, a few special shore duty commands have the right to use CAP, including Navy Recruiting Command, Recruit Training Command Great Lakes, Illinois, the Ceremonial Guard and the USS Constitution.

If you know your command's unit identification code you can see if your command is eligible by reviewing NAVADMIN 245/14.

Overhauling CAP

Navy manpower planners blamed overmanning in many ratings on this spot promotion program and called for it to be eliminated. But Moran, who is in favor of giving COs as much authority as possible, wanted to save it.

CAP season was the compromise.

Officials say that limiting it to this three-month window is the best choice, as it allows the program to be aligned with within a given fiscal year. COs must advance their people by Sept. 30 and submit the documentation to Navy Personnel Command by Oct. 15, information then used by advancement planners to adjust quotas for the fall advancement cycle.

This allows them to properly manage advancements so no ratings advance too many and risk gumming up advancements for everyone else.

Officials hope it is not a difficult adjustment to the new system. As it was, roughly 86 percent of all spot advancements in the Navy happened during the summer months before.

Setting quotas

There are a total of 2,238 CAP quotas available Navy-wide for fiscal year 2015. But not all of them get used, In 2014, COs only advanced about 1,600 sailors, down from about 1,700 in fiscal 2013.

But officials also noted the 2014 season was cut short by about three months in the shift from a calendar year to a fiscal year program.

How many advancements a CO is authorized to make is based on the size of the command. Those with 100 or fewer authorized enlisted billets can CAP two sailors: one to E-5 and one to E-6.

Those with more than 100, but fewer than 1,000, billets, like a cruiser, get two E-5 quotas and one for E-6. Those between 1,000 and 2,000, like a big deck amphib, get four E-5s and two E-6s.

The largest sea going commands, like aircraft carriers, with upward of 2,000 billets, can spot-advance six E-5s and two E-6s.

There are no quotas for E-4, commands can use E-5 or E-6 billets to instead advance someone to E-4, but they're still limited to the total number of quotas allowed by their command size.

Future possibilities

Right now, officials are taking a wait-and-see attitude on more tweaks to the CAP program, but there's already ideas being tossed around in the fleet and in Washington.

For now, the only way to get an automatic advancement to chief is through the Sailor of the Year process, in which four E-6s are spot-promoted.

Originally when Moran was mulling the change to the CAP season he also considered authorizing more spot promotions But in the end, he decided to hold the program in place and let the new rules take effect first.

Once officials see who is getting advanced as well as how many, they'll re-evaluate again — but that could take some time.

Many sailors told Navy Times last year that they'd like to see the program expand to shore duty commands, too, a move that officials said they'll consider.

"It's something that has been discussed, because it's something we're hearing from sailors a lot," a senior personnel leader said. "It's something we're interested in investigating, but we need to reserve this now, at least in the short-term, to sea duty and special shore commands."

4.) 6 Things to Know About 2015 Selective Reenlistment Bonus/ 01 MAY 15 [\[LINK\]](#)

WASHINGTON – The Selective Reenlistment Bonus plan has been updated. Here are six things Sailors should know about the new plan

1. NAVADMIN 106/15 contains the updated SRB eligibility and award level. Go read it at www.npc.navy.mil to see if you are eligible for a reenlistment bonus.
2. The increased award levels are effective immediately and decreased levels are effective 30 days from the release of the NAVADMIN.
3. Changes to award levels from the SRB plan released last April include: 26 award level increases, 25 reductions, 15 skills added, and five skills eliminated. An additional two skills were removed, but there is no loss of eligibility for Sailors since these skills were rolled into another existing SRB skill.
4. SRB provides incentives to Sailors with critical skills and experience to stay Navy. It rewards Sailors who attain special training in skills most needed in the fleet, and helps meet critical skill reenlistment benchmarks and enhance Navy's ability to size, shape and stabilize manning. Award levels are adjusted as reenlistment requirements for specific ratings and skill sets are met.
5. Sailors eligible for a SRB reenlistment are encouraged to work with their command career counselors, command master chiefs, and chain of command to discuss timing of reenlistment and procedures well before their EAOS.
6. SRB policy can be found at <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/career/enlistedcareeradmin/pages/srb.aspx>

For more news from Chief of Naval Personnel, visit www.navy.mil/cnp or www.navy.mil/local/cnp/.

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